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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/954,904	09/18/2001	Jie Zhang	8747.82	8603

21999 7590 06/30/2004

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EXAMINER

GEORGE, KONATA M

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

1616

DATE MAILED: 06/30/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/954,904	ZHANG ET AL.	
	Examiner Konata M. George	Art Unit 1616	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM
THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 10 June 2004.
- 2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-15, 17 and 19-23 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-6, 11-15 and 19-23 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) 7-10 and 17 is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

1-15, 17 and 19-23 are pending in this application.

Request for Continued Examination (RCE)

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on June 10, 2004 has been entered.

Allowable Subject Matter

2. Claims 7-10 and 17 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, set forth in this Office action and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

3. Claims 1-15, 17 and 19-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject

matter which applicant regards as the invention. It is unclear to the examiner what is meant by and “pre-determined duration of time”.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

4. Claims 1-6 and 11-15 and 19-22 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Argaud (US 4,963,360).

Argaud discloses a method for improving the absorption performance for the medicinal components to be applied to the skin; the absorption performance is generally accelerated through warming comprising an exothermic package body having a layer containing a medicinal component (col. 1, lines 12-28). It is the examiner's position that the exothermic layer will heat the patient's skin since that temperature is higher than body temperature (col. 2, lines 1-6).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claim 23 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Argaud (US Pat. No. 4,963,360).

Argaud discloses a method for improving the absorption performance for the medicinal components to be applied to the skin; the absorption performance is generally accelerated through warming comprising an exothermic package body having a layer containing a medicinal component (col. 1, lines 12-28). It is the examiner's position that the exothermic layer will heat the patient's skin since that temperature is higher than body temperature i.e. up to 45°C (col. 2, lines 1-6). The prior art reference of Argaud does not disclose to apply the apparatus when patient feels the onset of pain.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply the apparatus to treat pain. The invention is directed towards improved absorption of medicinal components through the skin. If one of ordinary skill in the art employed a pain relieving medicinal component to the apparatus it would be obvious to employ the apparatus when the user feels pain to alleviate the pain.

Response to Arguments

6. Applicant's arguments filed June 10, 2004 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicants argue that Argaud does not teach preparing and deciding beforehand an appropriate dosage, or controlling the surface area's exposure to oxygen, the medium's shape or the amount of heat generated. It is the position of the examiner that

the prior art does teach the claimed invention. Applicants argue that the prior art does not teach preparing and deciding beforehand an appropriate dosage. It is not taught anywhere in the claims about preparing and deciding before hand an appropriate dosage should be used. Applicants argue that the prior art does no actively control the surface area's exposure to oxygen. Applicants fail to show how the claimed invention regulates airflow into the shallow chamber. It is the position of the examiner that the prior art teaches a method of control. With respect to duration of heat, it would be controlled by the amount of oxygen reacting with the exothermic layer. With respect to duration of time, it would depend on the amount of time the oxygen is exposed to the exothermic layer.

Conclusion

7. Claims 1-6, 11-15 and 19-23 are rejected.

Telephone Inquiries

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Konata M. George, whose telephone number is (571) 272-0613. The examiner can normally be reached from 8AM to 5:30PM Monday to Thursday, and on alternate Fridays.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Thurman Page, can be reached at (571) 272-0602. The fax phone numbers

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for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 872-9306
for regular communications and for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (571) 272-1600.



Konata M. George
Patent Examiner
Art Unit 1616